

Stories, Memories And Vistas

Flinders University Gallery
State Library of South Australia
24 Nov 06 – 7 Jan 07

Eric Algra

Postcards From Forgotten Places
Photographs of regional and urban
South Australia

I must admit that I was a little concerned when first asked to review 'Postcards From Forgotten Places'. Described only as 'photographs of regional and urban South Australia', I wondered how much more could possibly be depicted of our nearby outback - how many more bales of hay and countryside ruins must be photographed before people move on to new subject matter?... I was very wrong. Firstly, the most important aspect, it seems, of Algra's work is not so much the landscape itself but the light. The tonal qualities in the black and white images are so dense that they are almost buzzing with energy. The landscape and buildings depicted seem to be placed purely for the purpose of being surfaces for the light to hit, bounce off and become absorbed into. That said, however, the subject matter is, for



'Forgotten Places'. Where his black and white works seem to depict a long, drawn-out space, Algra's colour works are bold, flat and textural. Often depicting one flat colour interrupted by hand-written text or graffiti, Algra uses the photographic medium to, indeed, create a sort of contemporary painting. As Rauschenberg once appropriated images and found text to create painted works, Algra takes the concept one step further by using found, painted surfaces to create photographic works. The intensity of colour together with the almost intentional placement of found texts makes the works incredibly effective and exciting to view as a body of work. These two distinct styles displayed within the 'Stories, Memories And Vistas' exhibition prove Algra's skills of duality in creating two such stylistically and technically different styles. The concepts

of these bodies of work, however, are intrinsically connected and, viewing one reflected against the other, 'Postcards From Forgotten Places' becomes an exciting and successful exhibition that is a joy to view.

Ede Horton

Instilled With Memories
Glass sculptures

As the other half of the 'Stories, Memories, And Vistas' exhibition, Ede Horton's sculptural pieces are an exciting contrast to Eric Algra's photographs. Bold and textural, Horton uses glass to create oversized buttons of varying colours, shapes, and textures. The button itself is rich with metaphor - not only does it play an integral part in holding or stringing objects

together, but it also has a strong historical element that can also be seen as stringing together our histories and cultural identities. The design and pattern of a button acts as a narrative for the place from whence it came: style (elegance, refinement or simplicity), together with materials (gold, glass, or plastic) gives a good insight into an age and an era.

In the Pop tradition of taking a functional object and enlarging it to the point of becoming ironically useless (think Claes Oldenburg's *Clothes*, 1976) Horton's buttons become heavy, laboured objects useful only as visual curiosities. The skill in her sculptured glass, however, is unmistakable - each button is structurally perfect, each with its own distinct style and edge. From simple, bold, flat buttons, to ornate, rounded pieces with multiple layers of form and imagery, Horton's sculptural works are both fun and thought provoking.

Although of diverse backgrounds, media, and styles, Eric Algra and Ede Horton's works come together conceptually to become 'Stories, Memories And Vistas'. In their own unique ways, Horton and Algra both depict their individual notions of memory, history, and cultural identity. The result of these two very distinct artists is a successful exhibition that can be viewed for a long period of time without every really seeing everything for all that it is. The concepts are curious and the skills are inherent. 'Stories, Memories And Vistas' is an exhibition easily enjoyed by viewers of all ages and backgrounds.

The exhibition also includes works on paper from the Flinders University Art Museum collection featuring colonial and 20th century landscapes, and urban images from South Australia.

Prelude: Visual Arts Graduate & Honours Exhibition 2006

South Australian School of Art,
University of South Australia
Season Closed

Merge: Graduating Visual Arts Student Exhibition

Light Square Gallery - Adelaide
Centre for the ARTS
Season Closed

Graduating student exhibitions are always fascinating in their terms of potential. It is always exciting to see what might be emerging onto the art scene, and what we may expect to see in future exhibitions around Adelaide. More so, however, is the incredible amount of support for the arts among Adelaideans. Not only are graduate shows donned with the

never-yielding support of parents and siblings, friends and lecturers alike, but also by a group of patronal individuals intent on supporting the arts in Adelaide. Their faces appear at nearly every emerging exhibition, though most of us are never entirely sure who they are - owners of galleries, patrons, or just enthusiasts.

The 'Merge' graduating student exhibition (M:Arts) has, once again, managed to introduce a few artists that no doubt will be continuing successful art practices after study life is over. Guy Bottroff's *A Model Family* combines polyester, fiberglass, plastic, and various alloys to create a ridiculously oversized model kit of a typical 1950's nuclear family. In plastic, shiny white the 'kit' contains pop-out body parts - with gloved hands holding cigarettes or martini glasses, a child's faced husband donned with style-conscious hat - indeed, everything needed to create the 'ideal family'.

The irony of such a bizarrely perfect yet utterly non-functional model is also felt in other works in the exhibition. Jeweller Minnette Walker, for example, uses the subtle irony of creating cufflinks made from vintage buttons set in silver. These jewellery pieces are simple yet bold and have an intrinsic modern design quality that makes them quite fun and accessible.

For SASSA graduates and honours students, 'Prelude' can certainly be seen as a way of putting ones best foot forward, so to speak. With such a wealth of students involved, there is very limited space for each artist to exhibit. What is incurred by these parameters, however, are pure examples of the highest quality artworks achieved by the SASSA students.

For honours students, especially, the level of polish - of a very coherent concept and understanding of the medium - is impressive. It is difficult to state any medium or artist that stands above the rest in this exhibition as there are certainly works within every medium that are superior examples of emerging art. Once again, graduating visual art students have made a promising impact on the Adelaide art scene.

Lauren Sutter

(TOP): Eric Algra

Torretta 1993

silver gelatin print

(LEFT): Joy Redman

Suburban Squeeze 1983

etching and aquatint, 33.5 x 60 cm

Flinders University Art Museum

Collection

(BELOW): Ede Horton

Pink 85-4 2006

cast glass, sandblasted and flaked

All copyright the artists



the most part, exquisite. There is a sense of the sacred in these landscapes, like a quiet homage to the past. At the same time, there are elements of the Baroque and the Modern. The placement of a chair in the middle of a field - now functionless and obsolete - becomes a symbol of what is missing in the landscape. Shop fronts, parading old signs and reflections of the dirty street outside, become a bizarre appropriation of Eugene Ionesco's Parisian shop fronts, now run down, shattered, and defunct. Similarly, the frontage of abandoned buildings become sculptural curiosities with ambiguous text and repetitive surface textures. Although some may read the images as depicting emptiness, I feel that Algra's black and white images are intensely rich and full - even the sky has a dense, forbidding presence over the undulating skyline. In contrast to this, however, are Algra's colour works, also exhibited in 'Postcards From



- Facing Life -
Everyday portraits
Fernando M. Gonçalves

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Exhibition open
from 15 November 2006,
until 03 January 2007
Mon - Fri 10am - 5pm